unable to inspire in the people the paralyzing fear or fanatical obedience characteristic of the psychological climate of the Stalin era in the U.S.S.R. In old Russia, not infrequently even an orgy of brutality was marked by sparks of humanity. The Tsarist regime was a loose, weak despotism, full of loopholes and contradictions. The regime of the Soviets is a despotism as cold and rigid as a set of mathematical theorems.

The Tsarist regime also lacked two important attributes of totalitarian despotism: the Iron Curtain and thought control. Even in the days of the blackest reaction in Tsarist Russia thought control was unknown. Censorship was traditionally stupid and unable to stop the propagation of "subversive" ideas in the nation. Between pre-Communist Russia and the outside world there was a continuous coming and going, a continuous exchange of newspapers, books, and correspondence. The subjects of the Tsar, although harassed by gendarmes, at least had freedom of thought, and even some of those who served the brutal and decaying regime were able to preserve their personal integrity and decency.

During a gloomy stretch of my imprisonment in the Castle of Ekaterinoslav, then one of the most terrible dungeons in the Empire, the prison fell into the hands of a sadistic gang of guards. Mistreatment of prisoners became routine. Hundreds were killed. With the aid of my friends, I wrote a detailed report on conditions in the prison and managed to smuggle it out. It was printed in newspapers abroad and submitted to the Duma. The government ordered an investigation that resulted in ending the mistreatment of prisoners. Everyone who worked on the report knew he would be killed if the guards discovered what kind of information he was gathering. But everyone also knew that outside the prison there were newspapers, the Duma, public opinion. One took a chance.

Can one imagine a group of Soviet citizens gathering information in the hope of exposing the misdeeds of government officials? They would not trust one another, and each would realize the futility of any appeal to public opinion in a land that has no place for independent opinion or an independent press.

In my years of imprisonment and banishment, I met persons of decency and integrity on all levels of bureaucracy. I saw a little old man, a chief guard in a prison, quieting a brawl among the convicts by stretching out his hand and showing an ugly scar on it—the mark of a saber blow he had taken in protecting a convict. I met the Governor General of eastern Siberia, Kniazev, who held it the highest duty of his office to protect the rights of individuals and defend the law against encroachments and abuses by the gendarmes and minor officials.

Why is it impossible to imagine a man of moral integrity in a posi-